

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace any/all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A process for reducing acrylamide production from a reaction of free asparagine and sugars in a cooked, starch based processed food, the process comprising:

(a) adding a raw, uncooked processed food comprising asparagine and sugars to a fermenter with an outlet strainer for straining fermented food, the fermenter containing ~~a fluid~~ an aqueous medium having a pH between about 4 and 8, wherein the aqueous medium contains the uncooked processed food and the aqueous medium comprises: ~~comprising~~

(i) a microorganism used for food fermentations for metabolizing sugars in the uncooked processed food,

(ii) yeast extract for fermentation by the microorganism, and

(iii) a neutralizing agent comprising a food-grade acid or an alkali metal hydroxide; ~~at least one of a food-grade acid or an alkali metal hydroxide;~~

(b) agitating the aqueous medium while fermenting the uncooked processed food in the aqueous medium ~~which is agitated in the fermenter with the microorganism~~ so as to ferment the sugars in the uncooked processed food sufficiently to reduce the acrylamide production upon cooking of the uncooked processed food;

(c) removing the aqueous medium from the uncooked processed food in the fermenter through the outlet strainer;

(d) washing the uncooked processed food from step (c); and ~~in the fermenter by introducing water to remove residues on the uncooked processed food from the fermentation through the outlet strainer; and~~

(e) baking or frying the uncooked processed food, thereby forming a fermented and cooked food that contains less acrylamide than without the fermentation;

wherein no sugars are added to the processed food through steps (a) to (e).

2. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 1 wherein the yeast extract is introduced in dry form into the aqueous medium.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) The process of Claim 1 or 2 wherein the aqueous medium for the fermentation is at a temperature between about 10 and 40°C and the aqueous medium has a pH between about 4 and 5 at the end of the fermentation.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) The process of Claim 1 or 2 wherein:
(i) the uncooked processed food comprises potatoes, and
(ii) step (e) comprises frying the uncooked processed food without drying the uncooked processed food after step (b) and before step (e).

7. (Currently Amended) The process of Claim 1 or 2 wherein:
(i) the uncooked processed food is selected from the group consisting of cereal meals and corn meals, and
(ii) the uncooked processed food is dried after step (b) and before the cooking in step (e), and
(iii) step (e) comprises baking the uncooked processed food in an oven.

8. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 1 wherein the cooked food is selected from the group consisting of potato chips, tortilla chips, pretzels, crackers, baked goods, fried breads, processed cereals and French fries.

9. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 1 wherein the aqueous medium is recirculated into and out of the fermenter while retaining the food in the fermenter.

10. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 1 or 2 wherein the microorganism is a yeast.

11. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 1 or 2 wherein the microorganism is a bacterium.

12. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 1 or 2 wherein the microorganism is a lactic acid producing microorganism.

13. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 1 wherein the microorganism is recycled between batches of the uncooked processed food which are processed in the fermenter.

14. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 1 wherein the pH of the aqueous medium is adjusted prior to the fermentation.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Original) The process of Claim 1 wherein at the end of the fermenting the aqueous medium has a pH between about 4 and 5.

17. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 1 wherein the uncooked processed food is dried after the fermentation and before the cooking in step (e).

18. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 1 wherein water provided in the aqueous medium in step (a) is distilled or otherwise purified.

19. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 1 wherein the uncooked processed food is potato slices.

20. (Currently Amended) A process for reducing acrylamide production from a reaction of free asparagine and sugars in a cooked, starch based processed food, the process comprising:

(a) adding a raw, uncooked processed food comprising asparagine and sugars to a fermenter with an outlet strainer for straining fermented food, the fermenter containing an aqueous medium having a pH between about 4 and 5, wherein the aqueous medium contains the uncooked processed food and the aqueous medium comprises: ~~comprising~~

(i) a microorganism used for food fermentations for metabolizing sugars in the uncooked processed food,

(ii) yeast extract for fermentation by the microorganism, and

(iii) a neutralizing agent comprising a food-grade acid or an alkali metal hydroxide; ~~at least one of a food-grade acid or an alkali metal hydroxide;~~

(b) agitating the aqueous medium while fermenting the uncooked processed food in the aqueous medium ~~which is agitated in the fermenter with the microorganism~~ so as to ferment the sugars in the uncooked processed food sufficiently to reduce the acrylamide production upon cooking of the uncooked processed food;

(c) removing the aqueous medium from the uncooked processed food in the fermenter through the outlet strainer;

(d) washing the uncooked processed food from step (c); and ~~in the fermenter by introducing water to remove residues on the uncooked processed food from the fermentation through the outlet strainer; and~~

(e) baking or frying the uncooked processed food, thereby forming a fermented and cooked food that contains less acrylamide than without the

fermentation;

wherein no sugars are added to the processed food through steps (a) to (e).

21. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 20 wherein the cooked food is selected from the group consisting of potato chips, tortilla chips, pretzels, crackers, baked goods, fried breads, processed cereals and French fries.

22. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 20 wherein the uncooked processed food is potato slices.

23. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 20 wherein the microorganism is a yeast.

24. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 20 wherein the microorganism is a lactic acid producing microorganism.

25. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 20 wherein at the end of the fermenting the aqueous medium has a pH between about 4 and 5.

26. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 1 wherein the uncooked processed food added in step (a) comprises less than 0.1 wt.% glucose.

27. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 1 wherein the uncooked processed food added in step (a) comprises less than 0.1 wt.% fructose.

28. (Currently Amended) A process for reducing acrylamide production from a reaction of free asparagine and sugars in a cooked, starch based processed food, the process comprising:

(a) adding a raw, uncooked processed food comprising asparagine, sugars, and less than 0.1 wt.% fructose to a fermenter containing an aqueous medium having a pH between about 4 and 8, wherein the aqueous medium contains the uncooked processed food and the aqueous medium comprises: ~~comprising~~

(i) a microorganism used for food fermentations for metabolizing sugars in the uncooked processed food,

(ii) yeast extract for fermentation by the microorganism, and

(iii) a neutralizing agent; ~~at least one of a food-grade acid or an alkali metal hydroxide;~~

(b) agitating the aqueous medium while fermenting the uncooked processed food in the aqueous medium ~~which is agitated in the fermenter with the microorganism~~ so as to ferment the sugars in the uncooked processed food sufficiently to reduce the acrylamide production upon cooking of the uncooked

processed food; and

(c) baking or frying the uncooked processed food, thereby forming a fermented and cooked food that contains less acrylamide than without the fermentation;

wherein no sugars are added to the processed food through steps (a) to (c).

29. (Currently Amended) A process for reducing acrylamide production from a reaction of free asparagine and sugars in a cooked, starch based processed food, the process comprising:

(a) adding a raw, uncooked processed food comprising asparagine, sugars, and less than 0.1 wt.% glucose to a fermenter containing an aqueous medium having a pH between about 4 and 8, wherein the aqueous medium contains the uncooked processed food and the aqueous medium comprises: comprising

(i) a microorganism used for food fermentations for metabolizing sugars in the uncooked processed food,

(ii) yeast extract for fermentation by the microorganism, and

(iii) a neutralizing agent; at least one of a food-grade acid or an alkali metal hydroxide;

(b) agitating the aqueous medium while fermenting the uncooked processed food in the aqueous medium ~~which is agitated in the fermenter with the microorganism~~ so as to ferment the sugars in the uncooked processed food sufficiently to reduce the acrylamide production upon cooking of the uncooked processed food; and

(c) baking or frying the uncooked processed food, thereby forming a fermented and cooked food that contains less acrylamide than without the fermentation;

wherein no sugars are added to the processed food through steps (a) to (c).

30. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 29 wherein the uncooked processed food added in step (a) comprises less than 0.1 wt.% fructose.

31. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 29 wherein the uncooked processed food added in step (a) comprises each of fructose, glucose, sucrose, maltose, and lactose at levels less than 0.1 wt.%.

32. (New) The process of Claim 29 wherein the fermented and cooked food that contains less acrylamide than without the fermentation has an acrylamide reduction of about 50% or more.

33. (New) The process of Claim 29 wherein the fermented and cooked food that contains less acrylamide than without the fermentation has an acrylamide reduction of about 50% to about 80%.

34. (New) The process of Claim 29 wherein the fermented and cooked food that contains less acrylamide than without the fermentation has an acrylamide reduction of about 70% to about 80%.